FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Assessor's Number	USGS Quad	Area(s)	Form Number
8-132	ORLEANS		EAS.776

Town/City: Town of Eastham

Place: *(neighborhood or village)*:
North Eastham

Address: 20 Massasoit Road

Historic Name: Higgins – Baker House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: ca. 1830

Source: vital records, historic maps, censuses

Style/Form: no style/1.5-sty block

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:
Foundation: brick

Wall/Trim: wood shingle/wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
none

Major Alterations *(with dates)*:
Shed extension, west side, 20th c.
Garage & breezeway connected, mid-20th c.

Condition: fair

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.63

Setting: The house is situated at the busy intersection of two major roads: the State Highway and Massasoit Road amid a mix of late 20th-century commercial and residential development.

Photograph

View from SW.

Locus Map (north at top)

Source: Mass GIS Oliver Parcel Viewer

Recorded by: Kathryn Grover & Neil Larson
Larson Fisher Associates

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: June 2020

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

The Higgins – Baker House, built in the manner of dwellings constructed ca. 1830, is a story-and-a-half wood frame single dwelling with a cross-gable kitchen wing. It presumably has a five-bay front façade with a center entrance concealed within a shed-roof enclosure with a central entrance flanked by windows on the front added in the 20th-century. The northwesterly gable end contains a single window centered on each level, and a one-story kitchen ell on the rear is positioned in line with the end wall of the house. A one-story, front-gable one-car garage, now repurposed as a room, is attached to the southeasterly end of the house by a one-story hyphen.

The house is sited on a narrow, triangular lot where Massasoit Road and the State Road intersect. The parcel has been to become wooded to screen the house from the highway. Parking areas have been created on the west and southerly sides of the building.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Though deeds for the house at 20 Massasoit Road can be traced soundly only to 1884 when David Higgins sold the house and its five acres to Flora Ellen Brown of Eastham.[1] The Higgins family was prolific in North Eastham, as well as farther south in the vicinity of the meetinghouse. Most of them were descendants of Benjamin Higgins, born in Plymouth in 1640, who married Lydia Bangs in Eastham in 1661. David Higgins (1804-1894) was the son of Joshua Higgins (1775-1860) and Mary Mayo (1774-1845); in 1827 he married Sally Swain (1807-1897). The 1830 census enumerated him and his household next to his father and in the neighborhood of Smiths, Hortons and Cobbs in North Easton. David and Sally had six children born between 1829 and 1844: Benaiah, Hannah Rebecca, David Gill, Maria Holmes, Asa and Levi Walker, and they occupied the house until it was sold in 1884. Map evidence is contradictory. The 1858 map, which shows the intersection of Massasoit Road and State Highway farther north of its current location, the highway being rerouted later in the 20th century, does not illustrate a house in this location. The house is depicted on the 1880 map of Eastham but annotated with the name of F. Hollis. It's possible that the house was moved from another, as yet unidentified place.

Prior to purchasing the Higgins homestead, Flora Ellen Brown lived nearby, in the household of her married sister Mary and Mary's husband Allen F. Young, a mariner; also part of the household was the girls' father, Ezekiel Brown. Flora Brown lived at 20 Massasoit Road until she married in 1895, to Wellfleet surfman John Nelson Kemp, and in 1900 she sold the property to John R. Murray of Fall River, at which point the house became a seasonal home.[2] Murray was born in Nova Scotia, came to the United States in 1881, and worked as a retail hardware clerk; he owned the property for fewer than seven years. In January 1907 he sold it to Lottie A. Baker, also of Fall River, whose family owned it for almost seventy years.[3]

Born in Canada, Lottie (Charlotte) A. Crandall had married Orrin S. Baker of New Bedford in 1888. The 1905 Eastham map shows the house with the name O. Baker. The couple moved to Fall River, where Baker worked as a bobbin maker, and had four children: Nathan R., Oswald G., Orrin Newton, and Lillian Emma. Lottie Baker died in 1916 and her husband Orrin in 1928. In 1931 the three Baker sons transferred title to the 20 Massasoit Road property to their sister Lillian. Lillian, also cited as Emma L. Baker, subdivided the parcel in 1974 and owned 20 Massasoit Road and its 0.59-acre lot until she died. In 1976 the administrator of her estate sold it to Roy Cansdale, Janet Cansdale, and Donna Cansdale of Locust Road in Eastham.[4] Roy Wilfred Cansdale was born in Portsmouth, England, and emigrated with his mother and siblings in 1920 to Durham, Connecticut, where his father Harry was already working. Cansdale worked as a milkman and later an electrician and married Janet St. Onge,

---

[1] David Higgins to Flora E. Brown, 18 September 1884, BCD 162:98.the
[2] Flora E. (Brown) Kemp, Wellfleet, to John R. Murray, Fall River, 14 June 1900, BCD 246:281. "Wellfleet," *Barnstable Patriot*, 17 June 1895, 4, notes that the marriage of John N. Kemp of this place to Flora E. Brown of North Eastham took place on 1 June and that the couple has "gone to housekeeping in this place, in the house owned by Mrs Samuel Kemp."
[3] John R. Murray, Fall River, to Lottie A. Baker, Fall River, 4 January 1907, BCD 321:176.
[4] Oswald G. Baker, O. Newton Baker, and Nathan R. Baker, Springfield, to Lillian Baker, Brooklyn NY, 24 September 1931, BCD 486:99; Ida N. Baker, administrator estate Emma L. Baker, to Roy Cansdale, Janet Cansdale, and Donna Cansdale, Locust Road, 23 April 1976, BCD 2330:301.

a native of New Brunswick, in 1950; she had come from Canada to Middletown, Connecticut, to work as a governess. The couple had children Donna, Judy, and Lori. The family had moved from Connecticut to Wellfleet in 1971 and opened Farmhouse Antiques in that town in 1988. The Cansdales transferred the property among themselves until 1999, when they sold it to Jackson T. Kitson; Kitson in turn sold 20 Massasoit Road in 2006 to Michael and Lisa A. Panaccione, the owners of record in 2020.[5]

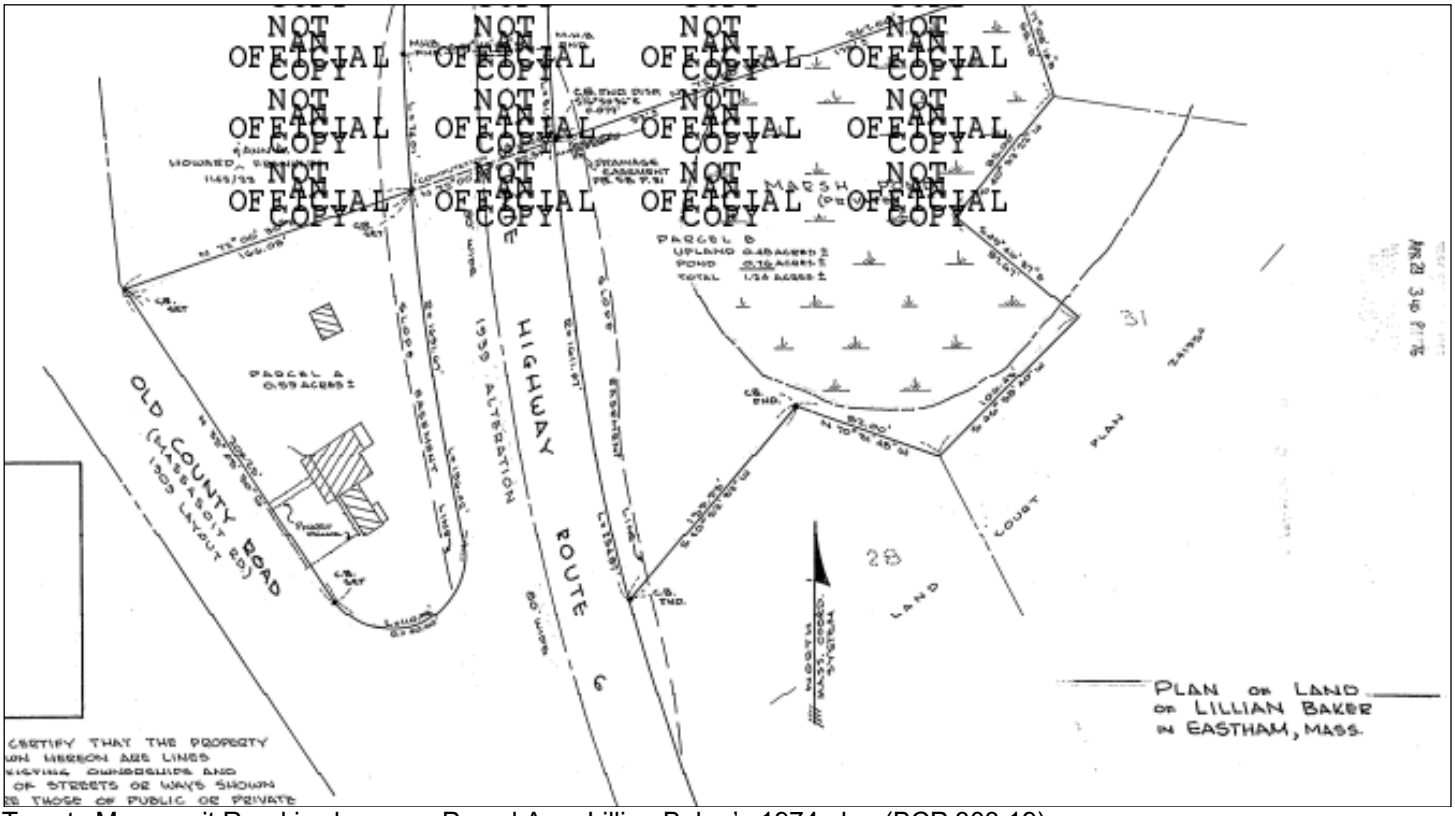
BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Barnstable County Registry of Deeds. Deeds, Land Court Records, and Subdivision Maps.
Barnstable Patriot Archives. Sturgis Library Digital Newspaper Archive, https://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/APA/Sturgis/#panel=home.
Deyo, Simeon L., ed. *History of Barnstable County, Massachusetts, 1620-1890*. New York: H. W. Blake, 1890.
Dudley, Dean (1823-1906). *Historical Sketches of the Towns and Cities of Plymouth and Barnstable Counties, Mass*. Wakefield, MA: Dean Dudley, 1873.
Dunham's 1929 Eastham (Mass.) Street Directory.
Town of Eastham Tax Commitment Books. 1902-57.
Lowe, Alice Albert. *Nauset on Cape Cod: A History of Eastham*. Falmouth, MA: Eastham Historical Society, 1968.
Massachusetts Historical Commission. "Reconnaissance Survey Report: Eastham." Typescript, Massachusetts Historical Commission, Boston, 1984.
Paine, Josiah. "Early Settlers of Eastham: Containing Sketches of All Early Settlers of Eastham." *Library of Cape Cod History and Genealogy*, nos. 32 and 33. Yarmouthport, MA: C. W. Swift, 1914 and 1916.
Resident and Business Directory of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, 1901. South Framingham, MA: A. E. Foss Publishing Co., 1901.
Thompson, Elroy Sherman. *History of Plymouth, Norfolk and Barnstable Counties, Massachusetts.* 3 vols. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1928.

MAPS
Rogers, Josiah, Elijah Knowles, and Simeon Kingman. A Map of Eastham. 1795.
Hales, John G. *Plan of Eastham and Orleans*. 1831.
Walling, Henry F. *Map of the Counties of Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Massachusetts Based upon the Trigonometrical Survey of the State*. New York: D. R. Smith and Co.,1858.
Official Topographical Atlas of Massachusetts Compiled and Corrected by H. F. Walling and O. W. Gray. Boston: Stedman, Brown and Lyon, 1871.
Atlas of Barnstable County, Massachusetts. Boston: George H. Walker and Co., 1880.
Atlas of Massachusetts from Topographical Surveys Made in Co-operation by the United States Geological Survey and the Commissioners of the Commonwealth 1884-1888. Boston: Commissioners of the Commonwealth, 1890.
Atlas of Barnstable County, Massachusetts . . . from Official Plans and Actual Surveys. Boston: Walker Lithograph and Publishing Co., 1905, 1910.

[5] Roy Cansdale, Janet Cansdale, and Donna Cansdale, Massasoit Road, to Roy Cansdale, Janet Cansdale, Donna Cansdale, and Judith C. Leckey, 22 April 1987, BCD 5685:308; Roy Cansdale, Janet Cansdale, Donna Cansdale, and Judith C. Leckey to Alice N. Fowler and Harry J. Cansdale, 20 Massasoit Road, 24 June 1992, BCD 8085:344; Alice N. Fowler and Harry J. Cansdale, 20 Massasoit Road, to Jackson T. Kitson, 14 May 1999, BCD 12271:74; Jackson T. Kitson, 20 Massasoit Road, to Michael and Lisa A. Panaccione, 6 October 2006, BCD 21415:25. The 20 Massasoit Road property is depicted on Parcel A on "Plan of Land of Lillian Baker in Eastham," November 1974, BCP 303:19. See Janet Cansdale's obituary in *Hartford Courant*, 13 January 1998, 63.

SUPPLEMENTAL IMAGES



Twenty Massasoit Road is shown on Parcel A on Lillian Baker's 1974 plan (BCP 303:19).

PHOTOGRAPHS
(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2019 unless otherwise noted)

View from NW.

View from SW.